

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate
Release
March 25, 2014

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT OBAMA,
PRESIDENT PARK OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH KOREA,
AND PRIME MINISTER ABE OF JAPAN
BEFORE TRILATERAL MEETING

U.S. Ambassador's Residence
The Hague, The Netherlands

6:38 P.M. CET

THE PRESIDENT: I want to thank President Park and Prime Minister Abe for being here today. I have worked closely with both the President and the Prime Minister, but this is the first time the three of us have had an opportunity to meet together and discuss some of the serious challenges that we all face.

Obviously Japan and the Republic of Korea are two of our closest allies in the world and our two most significant and powerful allies in the Asia Pacific region. The ties between our peoples run deep. We do an extraordinary amount of trade together. Our alliances with South Korea and Japan uphold regional peace and security. So our meeting today is a reflection of the United States' critical role in the Asia Pacific region, but that role depends on the strength of our alliances.

One of the things that brings us together today is our shared concern about North Korea and its nuclear weapons program. Over the last five years, close coordination between our three countries has succeeded in changing the game with North Korea, and our trilateral cooperation has sent a strong signal to Pyongyang that its provocations and threats will be met with a unified response and that the U.S. commitment to the security of both Japan and the Republic of Korea is unwavering, and that a nuclear North Korea is unacceptable.

So I very much look forward to discussing some of the specific steps that we can take to deepen that coordination in terms of both diplomacy and military cooperation. And that includes joint exercises and on missile defense.

So, again, I want to thank President Park and Prime Minister Abe for being here after a long summit. I appreciate their delegations being here as well. I think it's very important for our three nations to display this kind of unity and shared determination. It's an important message to our citizens; it's an important message to the Asia Pacific region. And this also gives me an opportunity to lay the groundwork for even more productive meetings when I visit both the Republic of Korea and Japan in April.

So, thank you again, Madam Prime Minister -- Madam President and Mr. Prime Minister. Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT PARK: (As interpreted.) Given the increasingly uncertain developments in North Korea, the critical need for closer coordination among the three countries with regard to North Korea, the North Korean nuclear issue, the chance to engage in an exchange of views with President Obama and Prime Minister Abe is very significant. The North Korean nuclear issue poses a major threat to peace and stability in the region, and it is vital that the international community, including Korea, the U.S. and Japan, fashion a united response.

The fact that the leaders of the three countries have gathered together and they're discussing the issue of the North Korean nuclear weapons issue is in and of itself very significant. Should North Korea embark on the path to denuclearization on the basis of sincerity, then there will be a way forward to address the difficulties confronting the North Korean people.

The United States has worked very hard to make today's meeting happen. I sincerely hope that this meeting will offer a chance for us to reaffirm our trilateral coordination and strengthen cooperation on the nuclear front.

PRIME MINISTER ABE: (As interpreted.) I am so delighted that we are able to hold the Japan-U.S.-Republic of Korea trilateral summit today. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to President Obama for hosting this summit. And I am so very happy to be able to see President Park Geun-Hye.

It is highly meaningful and also timely that the leaders of the three countries sharing basic values and strategic interests are gathering together to have extensive discussions of security. Particularly, it is extremely important to be able to confirm close cooperation amongst Japan, the United States and the Republic of Korea on the issue of North Korea. And the three countries would like to cooperate so that North Korea will be able to take a positive stance with regard to nuclear and missile issues and also humanitarian issues, such as the separated families of the Republic of Korea.

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Thank you very much, everybody.

END

6:44 P.M. CET